



Parks & Recreation Commission

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2010
7:30 P.M.**

**WESTON TOWN HALL
DAUGHERTY COMMISSION ROOM**

David C. Juneau
Chairman
Committees:
Administrative,
Fields

Carl Bernstein
Vice Chairman
Committees:
Fields, Parks

Eric Albert
Secretary
Committees:
Administrative,
Programs

Marc Butlein
Commissioner
Committee:
Programs

P.J. Dodge
Commissioner
Committee:
TBD

Carlos Mello
Commissioner
Committee:
Aquatics

Robert A. Uzenoff
Commissioner
Committee:

Official action of the commission in these minutes is indicated by underlining.

The Weston Parks and Recreation Commission (WPRC) held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, February 8, 2010 at Weston Town Hall. Commissioners present: Eric Albert, Marc Butlein, David Juneau, Carlos Mello and Robert Uzenoff. Commissioners absent: Carl Bernstein and P.J. Dodge. Staff present: Weston Parks and Recreation (P&R) Director David Ungar. Public present: none.

- 1) Call to order: Mr. Juneau called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.
- 2) Approval of Minutes. Minutes of the January 11, 2010 meeting were approved with no corrections. For: Albert, Butlein, Juneau, Mello and Uzenoff. Against: None. Abstain: None.
- 3) Public Forum: None.
- 4) Unfinished Business
 - a) Review of Action Items from January 11, 2010 Meeting.
 - i) 2009-22 – Mr. Mello reported that he is coordinating schedules with the Executive Director of the local United Way chapter and with Jen Ruddy of the Weston Senior Center and hopes that a meeting will occur in the coming month. Mr. Mello provided further information to the Commission regarding the United Way and its ongoing involvement in various Weston programs, such as the Weston Warm-Up Fund.

- ii) 2010-01 – See discussion at Item 4(c) below.
- iii) 2010-02 – Mr. Mello provided the Commission with a draft WPRC Capital Replacement Schedule, to be utilized to start framing the discussion regarding future P&R capital budget planning. According to Mr. Mello, the Schedule would allow the WPRC to develop a more fine-tuned approach and framework for future discussions with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. The Commission discussed the draft schedule and agreed that it was a very good starting point. Mr. Mello indicated that the next step would be to expand the draft to include a time-line with projected years and dollar figures. Mr. Mello expects to have the expanded draft Schedule ready for discussion at the Commission's March 8, 2010 meeting. Mr. Uzenoff indicated that there is a town capital planning committee that meets at various points throughout the year and that, after the Commission finalizes its capital plan, it may be useful to meet with the town planning committee, as well as the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, early in the next budget cycle.
- iv) 2010-03 – This item remains open.
- v) 2010-04 – Mr. Albert discussed his initial investigation into the feasibility of revamping P&R's website and adding automated program registration. Mr. Albert stated that the first priority should be improving the P&R website, regardless of whether automated program enrollment is included or not. That feature could be added to a revamped website in the future. Mr. Albert stated that generally speaking there seemed to be two options: (1) creation from scratch of a website; or (2) off-the-shelf software. Regarding option 1, Mr. Albert indicated that it could be cost-prohibitive unless someone in town with web development expertise could volunteer their services. In addition, the associated fees could be expensive and such a site could be more difficult and time-consuming for P&R staff to maintain. Option 2 appears to be a more feasible alternative. In this regard, Mr. Albert reported that he had spoken with a representative of League Athletics, whose software is used by many of the town's sports organizations, all four PTOs and the Cub Scouts troop. The option would be very cost effective and easy to use; however, it is not designed specifically as a parks and recreation tool. Mr. Ungar suggested that there are parks and recreation-specific web products that are well regarded and currently used by other local departments. The Commission supported further investigation of these issues. Mr. Albert and Mr. Ungar will conduct further investigation and report back to the Commission.

b) Parks & Recreation Proposed Budget Update; Selectmen's Budget Hearing.

i) Mr. Ungar reported that the First Selectman is considering the possibility of recommending P&R management over P&R enterprise fund revenue, as an outgrowth of discussions concerning this year's capital budget requests (specifically, Bisceglie infield repairs). The issue may be raised by the First Selectman before the Board of Finance as part of the ongoing budget cycle. The Commission discussed the potential positive and negative ramifications of enterprise fund revenue management.

(1) Mr. Uzenoff inquired how this would fit into the budget cycle. Mr. Butlein raised concerns about what the Board of Finance might require if P&R is given increased management of positive enterprise fund revenue, including possible impact on P&R's annual operating budget.

(2) Mr. Juneau stated that he will have further discussions with the First Selectmen about the budget/enterprise fund issues and will endeavor to update the Commission in advance of the March 8, 2010 meeting.

c) Program Fee Discussion.

i) Fourth of July Fireworks: Mr. Ungar stated that the current fee structure is \$5/adult and \$2/child, and recommended making the fee \$5 for all attendees. At the request of the Commission, Mr. Ungar surveyed surrounding towns to inquire about the fees they charge for their fireworks shows and reported as follows: Wilton (\$35 per car with premier parking; \$15 per car without); Westport (\$30 per car); New Canaan (\$25 per family); Norwalk (\$20 per car); Fairfield (free); Danbury (free); Bridgeport (free); Ridgefield (free).

(1) The Commission had an extensive discussion regarding whether to increase the fees for this event, including discussing whether P&R should have further control over the funds generated from increased program fees. The Commission also discussed whether it should seek to raise additional funds through the selling of certain concessions at the event, through additional sponsorships, or through charging the concessionaires at the event. The Commission also discussed the feasibility of charging by the carload rather than per individual and whether additional efforts can be undertaken to ensure that all fireworks attendees pay the admission fee. Because of the wide variety of opinions expressed, Mr. Juneau deferred a decision on setting the

2010 Fourth of July admission fees so that the Commission can give further thought to the issue.

- ii) Bisceglie Scribner Park (BSP) Pond Usage Fee: Mr. Ungar stated that the annual usage fees used to be \$120 (family plus nanny); \$100 (family); \$50 (individual); \$5 (daily drop-in), although the fees had not been charged the prior two summers. At the January 11, 2010 meeting, the Commission decided to reinstitute a pond usage fee for the 2010 summer and asked Mr. Ungar to survey surrounding towns to determine what they charge for a similar amenity. Mr. Ungar reported that very few surrounding towns have similar swimming ponds. Those that do charge the following annual fees: Merwin Meadows in Wilton (\$60/family pass, \$30/individual); Wolf Park in Monroe (\$160/family, \$45/adult, \$30/child); Topstone Park in Redding (\$120/family, \$55/individual). Mr. Ungar described how Merwin Meadows is the closest comparison to BSP, while Wolf Park and Topstone Park offer amenities in addition to a swimming pond.

- (1) The Commission had an extensive discussion regarding setting the BSP pond usage fees, including whether reintroduction of the fees was necessary, how any increased revenue would be utilized, and whether the fees would deter pond attendance/usage. Mr. Juneau made a motion to set the BSP pond usage fees as follows: \$60/annual family pass, \$30/annual individual pass, \$5/daily individual drop-in. Mr. Albert seconded the motion. For: Albert, Juneau, Mello, Uzenoff. Against: Butlein. Abstain: None. Motion carries 4-1.

d) Program Registration Survey of Surrounding Towns.

- i) Mr. Ungar conducted a survey of 6 surrounding towns (Bethel, Brookfield, Easton, Fairfield, Redding and Wilton) regarding their program registration procedures to learn (i) how they conduct registrations (in person, by phone/fax/mail, on-line); (ii) whether they have a lottery system or utilize first-come/first-served for over-subscribed programs, (iii) whether they use parks and recreation specific software programs; and (iv) whether they accept credit card payments. See attached schedule for the results of this survey.
- ii) In response to a previous complaint about registration procedures for an over-subscribed program, the Commission considered whether to institute a lottery as opposed to keeping the current first-come/first-served system in place. The Commission observed that all six of the surveyed towns utilize first-come/first-served with a waiting list; none use a lottery

registration system. The Commission decided to consider the lottery issue further at its next meeting.

- iii) Issues concerning on-line registration, software programs and acceptance of credit cards will be further investigated as part of Mr. Albert's and Mr. Ungar's ongoing review of website enhancement/automated enrollment issues, described in Item 4(a)(v) above.

e) Other Unfinished Business: None.

5) Reports of Standing Committees and Resulting Motions.

a) Administrative Committee (Messrs. Juneau and Albert).

- i) Mr. Juneau reported that he and Mr. Uzenoff recently attended the town's Speak-Up forum. There were no questions specifically for WPRC, although related issues were discussed concerning the P&Z town survey and senior issues. The Bisceglie ballfield repair issue was mentioned briefly.

b) Aquatics Committee (Mr. Mello).

- i) No additional issues for discussion.

c) Fields Committee (Messrs. Bernstein and Juneau).

- i) No additional issues for discussion.

d) Programs Committee (Messrs. Albert and Butlein).

- i) No additional issues for discussion.

e) Parks Committee (Mr. Bernstein).

- i) No additional issues for discussion.

6) New Business

a) P&R Satisfaction Survey.

- i) This issue was fully discussed at the WPRC's prior meeting on January 11, 2010. This issue is now closed.

7) Correspondence: None.

8) Announcements, Remarks for the Good of the Order.

a) Mr. Juneau informed the Commission that Mr. Bernstein was recovering from recent knee surgery.

9) Adjournment: The Commission adjourned at 10:20 p.m., Butlein/Mello motion and second. All in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Albert

OPEN ACTION ITEMS

- 2009-17 Opened on 9/14/09. Mr. Ungar will have a rain sensor installed at MFP in order to regulate the irrigation system. Decision as of October 5, 2009: Deferred until Spring 2010 due to scheduling and needless wear and tear during winter to sensor.
- 2009-22 Opened on 11/9/09. Mr. Mello will pursue the idea of adult fitness with both the United Way and the Weston Commission on Aging.
- 2010-01 Opened on 1/11/10. The Commission will set the 2010 BSP pond usage fee and Fourth of July fireworks admission prices at its February 8, 2010 regular meeting. The BSP pond usage fee was set. A decision on the Fourth of July fireworks admission prices was deferred pending further discussion.
- 2010-02 Opened on 1/11/10. Mr. Mello will draft a proposed framework for a P&R 10-year capital plan. Mr. Mello presented a first draft Capital Asset Replacement Schedule at the Commission's February 8, 2010 meeting and will provide an expanded draft at the March 8, 2010 meeting.
- 2010-03 Opened on 1/11/10. The Fields Committee will further investigate BSP ballfield repair/maintenance options, including potentially seeking an expert opinion.
- 2010-04 Opened on 1/11/10. Mr. Albert will work with Mr. Ungar to further investigate the option of automating P&R program registration and upgrading the P&R website. Mr. Albert provided an initial report to the Commission at the February 8, 2010 meeting and will provide a further report at the March 8, 2010 meeting.
- 2010-05 Opened on 2/8/10. Mr. Juneau to speak with First Selectman Weinstein regarding P&R budget/enterprise fund issues.
- 2010-06 Opened on 2/8/10. The Commission shall make a decision about whether to institute a lottery system for program registration in place of the current first-come/first-served system.